

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

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"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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Hindered Prayer

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

(Preached at Platteville, Wisconsin, Sunday afternoon, April 21, 1940, at Platteville Gospel Tabernacle. Stenographically reported.)

Isaiah, chapter fifty-nine, verses one and two:

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Now in First Peter the third chapter, notice verses one to seven on the question of answered prayer and hindered prayer:

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

"While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear."

If any of you wives have husbands who are not Christians and who won't listen to the preaching of the gospel, then go ahead and be subject to him, obey him, so you can win him to Christ. You think, "That won't work." God's way always works. Yours hasn't, why don't you try God's way?

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet

spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

"For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

"Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Now I have read you those verses to get to this part—God says there are certain things I am anxious for you to do with the particular purpose that your prayers be not hindered. The wife ought to be in subjection to her husband, and the husband ought to dwell with the wife according to knowledge, giving honor to her as unto the weaker vessel, that your prayers be not hindered. How important it is for a Christian to get his prayers answered.

Now verse twelve of the same chapter:

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."

Now I have read to you three separate passages that indicate certain reasons why prayers are not answered. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not

hear." And then wives and husbands, that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7) and now First Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil," says the Scripture.

In these passages we see then that God says there are certain reasons you don't get your prayers answered. Won't you be prayerful with me as I investigate the Scriptures and see why it is our prayers are not answered? So much depends on your prayer life. Nearly all a Christian's happiness depends on prayer. In John 16:24 the Saviour said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Now the time that you are not happy, not really full of joy, the lack of prayer is the answer, or you are praying and not getting heard. When you do not get your prayers answered, you are not happy. Any Christian that gets his prayers answered, is full of joy.

There are other Scriptures on the same line. God intends for us to get our prayers answered day by day. A Christian's daily bread ought to depend on prayer. The power of the Holy Spirit for soul winning depends on praying. Then if something blocks the prayer life and you cannot get God to hear your prayers, oh, what a bad condition to be in, if you a Christian, can't be happy and can't have power and can't have what you need! You can't prove to unsaved people that the Lord is with you when you do not get your prayers answered.

Prayer Hindered By Wrong Home Life

I am going to speak to you then on hindered prayer. I am going to begin where God begins, and where God begins is in the home. My! You look as nice as pie this afternoon! Butter wouldn't melt in your mouth! Anybody would have an idea that these sisters never say a cross word, and these men, the way they have their hair slicked back and their faces shine—you look fine! Oh, yes! But it is a different story back home. This is just Sunday and you are at church now. You are not expected to live the same way the rest of the week, are you?

I know some sister, she can sing in the choir, and testify—but back home she is a hell-cat on wheels! She can sit in the parlor and lick the skittles in the kitchen! That is back at home. You remember when Achan had stolen some of the Lord's money, a wedge of gold and fifty shekels of silver and a Babylonish garment. Where are they, Achan? Search me. But God knows back home hidden in the tent is where it is. Back home in the tent was the thing that damned his family and brought a curse to all Israel. Your home life is where you broke your prayer life most often. Many a time a pastor will brag on some member, "Brother Jones is a regular 'Amen corner' deacon. We couldn't get along without Brother Jones." Or, "Sister So and So surely is fine. You can depend on her to always be here and do her part." But the wrong kind of home life makes it so God won't answer their prayers!

I was in a revival service at Abernathy, Texas, some years ago, and a woman said to me, "Tell me what is wrong. I do all I know. I sing in the choir, I give my testimony, and yet my own daughter

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

A Saviour for Lost Sheep

BY DR. W. M. ROBERTSON
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(Preached in Grand Opera House, service of the Christian Business Men's Committee of Chicago, February 23, 1940. Stenographically reported.)

I turn today to a very familiar passage in the Old Book, the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and these well known words in verse six:

"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

You will notice, dear friends, the universality of departure from God and the universality of the depravity in man are all right here, and this wonderful verse has been the gateway of hope, the great avenue of salvation to multitudes, and I pray it may be so today.

Often I used to wonder why the Bible said, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Speaking from my own experience, it seemed to me it would be more accurate to say, "All we like lions and tigers have gone astray," considering with such reckless riot and indulgence, with such flagrant defiance of God we departed from the path and went our own route. And yet, here is this word that likens us to sheep. "All we like sheep have gone astray." There is something pathetic and yet something very painful about that simile. Why is it that God likens the sinner in his folly to sheep going astray? Well, did you ever watch a sheep? It will nibble, nibble, nibble and never look where it is going until it finds itself on the brink of a precipice and then the poor silly thing has no power to reverse itself and find its way home again. Sheep are very foolish. They will follow another sheep and never stop to think. One will start the procession and then all follow on. All we like sheep have gone astray.

You can take a dog away from home and it will find its way back. You can take a cat away, and he will find his way back, but a sheep is so foolish it just wanders and wanders and then when it discovers its plight, it has no power to recover itself.

I remember as a little boy we had a cat in the family for some years. I got to be very fond of that cat. It used to run with me to the butcher shop in the morning and stand outside until I came outside with some meat. It always knew—and I never disappointed it—it knew that I would have some little titbit for it there. But poor old Tabby got old and was becoming a general nuisance. One day my father said, "Now, Willie, I want you to take this cat and put it in a basket with some lead to weigh it down, and you go down to the canal and slip it over the bank."

Oh, my! What a task to give me! To take my old friend and put her in a watery grave! But orders are orders, and very reluctantly and with a heavy heart I took that basket. I could hear the poor old thing inside purring away. She knew I was beside her, and little did she think what was going to happen to her. I got to the canal and waited a bit. I began to cry. But I said, "All right," and gave the thing a shove, and in it went, plunk! below the water. I went on my way home a very sad boy, wondering what life would be without my friend. And lo, and behold, when I opened the door and went in, the first thing that met my eye was old Tabby sitting in front of the fire purring away for all she

was worth. You can do all sorts of things with cats—they say they have nine lives. That one surely had! I took her away but she came back. But a sheep never finds its way home, and that is why the Bible says all we like sheep have gone astray. We can go far, far from God, but there is not one of us who can ever find our way home. The Good Shepherd has to come to seek the lost and bring it back, and thank God! He came. And He says, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way."

That is what man did at the beginning. The first bleak, black hour that shrouded God's creation with darkness was when man took his own way rather than God's. That first initial step in self will involved the whole of humanity in sin and in darkness, and it has been doing that ever since. Taking our own way, that is what causes the trouble in the home. We all want our own way. That is what is causing the trouble in the church—so many want their own way. That is what causes the trouble everywhere, we want to take our own way. Friends, this Old Book tells us there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. Oh, we hear folk say, "Every man has a right to his own opinion." Yes, if his own opinion is right! There are a great many folk today who are setting themselves up as judges in this thing. They say, "Well, I am quite competent to carve out my destiny." Poor, foolish man away from God, taking his own way, in spite of all the centuries to prove the folly of that departure from God. They are busy at it still. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

It seemed good to the Pilgrim in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* just to take that little step aside from the right road from which he was traveling. The other path seemed much more inviting. It didn't seem to have so many hardships. But you know the disaster that resulted because he took his own way. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way."

And some of us who are Christians haven't learned the lesson that God's way is the best way. There was a gentleman up in the north of Scotland taking a walk one day and he came to a place where the road parted and an old lady was standing in the fork of the road and she was going in for some strange antics. She had a stick, and she was throwing it up and letting it fall, and throwing it up and letting it fall. Finally it fell and she picked it up and started to walk.

"Excuse me, Madam, but what did you mean by throwing that stick up and letting it fall down, and throwing it up again and so on?" the gentleman asked.

She said, "I always do that when I want to find out the way to take. But it wasn't falling in the right direction and I kept throwing it up until it fell like I wanted to go."

Most folk are like that. We say, "Lord, lead me in the way Thou seest best for me," and then we go ahead and do our own way. It is like a man I know who wanted a wife, and he was praying that the Lord might choose a wife for him. Now there were two rather attractive women, but for one he had a special liking, and he used to pray, "Lord, choose my wife for me, but give me Maggie." What the people want is their own way.

Now after reading that verse (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

EDITORIAL NOTES

1. DUBUQUE REVIVAL

The editor closed revival services in the First Presbyterian Church, Dubuque, Iowa, Sunday night, April 28, with twelve coming forward to claim Christ. There were about ninety-one professions of faith in Christ. We have no exact records of some who were saved in the Sunday School services. God's blessing was specially manifest the last night. In the last two or three days of the meetings, there were four old ladies saved; I think two of them past seventy. The pastor and people seemed very happy. They have arranged for another two weeks of revival service after one month's intermission.

After mentioning the dear Neundorf family last week, I feel a tug at my heart to mention others who were specially burdened and whose wisdom and prayers and labors helped greatly in the revival, but I refrain since I cannot mention all who were a blessing.

2. THIS WEEK WITH CICERO BIBLE CHURCH, CICERO, ILL.

This is written Monday. This week, April 29 to May 5, the editor will be special speaker at the Annual Missionary Conference of Cicero Bible Church, Cicero, Illinois (a suburb of Chicago). Pastor William McCarrell is a splendid soul winner, greatly beloved, and we anticipate real joy in fellowship with him and this great church and the missionaries who will speak.

Today, as a part of the week's program, the Fundamental Ministers' Association have their meeting.

3. AT HOME WITH FAMILY TWO WEEKS

This morning it was a great joy to arrive at our new home in Wheaton. Three of the children have had serious throat infections, but are better, thank God! Mrs. Rice and the children are delighted with Wheaton. Neighbors have been specially kind. How happy I am to be able to spend the nights and part of the days at home while speaking at Cicero daily, some twenty miles away. The next week I will remain at home also to write, catch up on mail, rest, and visit with my dear family. Praise the Lord for His mercies!

4. MOVING EXPENSES ARE HEAVY

We believe that readers will pray with us about expenses. We had to spend about \$500 moving from Dallas to Wheaton; \$200 of it we borrowed from a bank in Dallas, and our Heavenly Father provided the rest. *The Sword of the Lord* has never become self-supporting, and so we invite those who are interested in this good work to pray that God will provide the extra money that had to be spent getting to the new location. He has never failed us yet, and we feel quite sure He never will!

HINDERED PRAYER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

laughs in my face when I try to talk to her about the Lord. I am the first one to go out and try to win somebody, but I can't get anybody saved. Why is it?"

I was young then and I didn't know as much as I do now, and I was a little scared of telling her the truth, but the trouble with her was this: She was an old maid school teacher when she married. And a man married her who almost missed getting married altogether, and he thought she was fine. He turned everything over to her. When there was a service in the morning, she would be right there. Never mind about cooking dinner or fixing the beds or washing the dishes, her husband would do that. And she took the car and gadded all over the country and left her husband to do the house work. The poor sap, he didn't know any better than to do it, I guess. She went to meeting and prayed in public, but her own daughter laughed in her face about it! I tell you right now, back home many times is the real reason why your prayers are not answered.

What does God say about it? In the first place He talks to wives. When God is giving instructions about the whole family serving God, He talks to the man first. He talks to the parents before He talks to the children, and He talks to husbands instead of wives, and to masters instead of servants. He talks to rulers instead of citizens. But if it is their duty to each other that He is talking about, He talks first to servants and then to masters; first to citizens and then to rulers; first to wives and then to husbands. So here He said to the wives, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands." Some of you women say, "But I don't like to mind my husband." There is nothing new about that. Nobody likes to mind anybody. Everybody in the penitentiary now is there because they did not like to obey the law. The devil is in Hell now because he didn't like to obey God. You don't like to bow and scrape and do what you are told to do. Every boy that breaks his dad's and mother's hearts and drinks and plays the fool or wastes his living with harlots like the prodigal boy — the trouble with that prodigal boy was that he didn't want to mind anybody, that's all. And any of you wives who don't like to mind your husbands, you don't want to mind anybody, you want your own way like all the rebels and criminals and sinners that go to Hell do. That is the trouble about people who go to Hell, not wanting to bow the knee and let Jesus Christ have the first place.

A young woman said to me, "I swore I wouldn't serve God when He let my mother die. I told Him I would never serve Him, and do you think I am going to crawl now?"

"Take your choice, Sister," I told her. "You will crawl. I don't care whether you crawl now or when you are dragged out of Hell to face Jesus Christ on the White Throne Judgment!"

And I tell you what is wrong with the world now, nobody wants to crawl. Everybody wants to ride and be boss. Nobody wants to take orders. You want your husband saved and your prayers answered. When you get down on your knees before God Almighty, do you want all the angels to hush their whispers and listen to what you say, and for God to have it put down? All right, then, buckle under and be a good wife. But some of you say, "I don't like that." Then take it out on the Lord. When you get home, so you will know where it is, the part you want to cut out of your Bible, that is in First Peter, the third chapter, verses one to seven, all you unbelievers and rebels against God.

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The way to do that, now notice, he said so you can get your prayers answered, so your prayers will not be hindered, now He says to you husbands, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." You great big stand-up-in-the-corner-and-cry-for-butter-milk babies, you sissies, you shirkers and slackers, you leave it to your wife to have all the religion for the family and to raise the children and do the praying and to take them to church! Sure you do, and you are a sissy and a coward and you haven't the stuff it takes! If it hadn't been that some of these good women married the first forked-stick with pants on that came along, you would have been an old bachelor. You are not fit to be a husband and a father! If I were you, I would say, "By God's grace I will be the high priest here, and take the responsibility and live like it and give my wife honor as the weaker vessel." God never intended the woman to have the headship in the home. She has too much burden for her slender shoulders, and no woman who pleases God will seek it or take it. And the woman who does not please God and takes it will not be prospered as for God's man to do it. "I don't think that matters," you think. But it matters when you are on your praying bones and your baby is about to die or you don't have work and you are in a tight and God won't pay any mind. He said do this that your prayers be not hindered.

Now God's order in the home is the only thing that works just right. And anything but God's order in the home is going to lead to prayers unanswered and prayers hindered. God in His mercy loves people who do wrong. But you say, "Oh, why don't He answer my prayers?" But you block your prayers many times by the wrong kind of home life. The next time you get on your knees and God doesn't seem to pay any mind, just remember that. Did you ever pray and God seemed to stuff cotton in His ears and nobody listened at all? You could just tell you were not getting anywhere with it. You rang, and rang the telephone and nobody answered. You rattled the door knob and knocked on the front door, and you knew they were there, you could hear them inside, but God didn't come to the door at all when you prayed. You knew your prayer didn't get higher than your head, it didn't hit the ceiling even. Do you know what is the matter? It may be several things, but one of them is, you won't take God's place for you in your home. You are not willing to take God's place for you in your home, and your prayers are hindered as God said they would be.

You boys and girls, sometimes now and then boys and girls feel like they are going to be good Christians and love the Lord Jesus, but they won't do what mother and dad says. No, no, you think, I'll be a good Christian but I won't mind anybody but Jesus Christ. No, you won't. No one will be a good Christian who isn't first a good daughter or a good son or a good citizen, unless you take the place God gave you. That is right. My wife couldn't be a good Christian unless she was first a good wife. This girl couldn't be a good Christian except in this place as a servant under Jesus Christ for the work. My little girls couldn't be good Christians except they say, "I will be what God said to be and listen to God's orders from my dad." I didn't make it that way. "That your prayers be not hindered," by the wrong kind of home life. Do you have the grace to check up and find out what is wrong that you have been displeasing God? You have been saying, "Why is my boy not saved and why can't I get what I need? Will you check up and say, 'All right, Lord, give Thy Word, I will take it to my heart and see what is wrong and will let You patch it up?' Do you have the grace to do that? I hope you have, 'that your prayers be not hindered.'"

Unforgiveness Blocks Prayer

Let's see then. I will read you a good many scriptures. I can't find them all, but we can find some

reasons why your prayers are not answered. Matthew 6:9-13 is a wonderful prayer. It is what is usually called "the Lord's Prayer," or the model prayer.

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."

That is mighty good for a model prayer, but there is only one part that Jesus goes back and comments on. "One part is so vital you will let slip by an important lesson if you don't be careful. I am going to say it again," Jesus said (verses 14 and 15):

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

All right, here it is as plain as day. The Lord Jesus said if you forgive others their sins, He will forgive you. But if you don't He won't forgive you. That is as clear as the Word of God could be. Jesus illustrated this and brought it up again and again. For instance, in Matthew eighteen He talked about it and said, "A certain man called in one of his servants who owed him lord money. His lord said to him, 'Pay me what you owe.'"

"I can't do it, but if you will have mercy on me, I will pay you all."

"Then," Jesus said, "the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth (he was very angry), and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts (not just with your tongues) forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Now God says you can't get along with God, unless you can forgive everybody that sins against you. If you will not forgive men their trespasses, neither will I forgive you.

Let's notice carefully two senses in which the word *forgiveness* is used. There is one sense in which it is used of sinners who come for forgiveness of all their sins for salvation. In that sense, I am already forgiven, I am already born again. My sins are laid on Jesus Christ and I am a child of God. In that sense, my sins are carried as far as the east is from the west. God has put all my sins behind His back. They are buried in the depths of the sea and He will remember them against me no more forever. Now all my sins are buried. That is the reason in Romans the fourth chapter the scripture quotes David as saying:

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:7, 8).

God never charges up sin to me any more in this sense. Jesus paid for that and I can sing:

"Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe,
Sin had left a crimson stain,
He washed it white as snow."

But, thank God, all that is forgiven.

Now there is another sense in which the word *forgiveness* is used

about our sins, and that is for one who is a child of God now, for me — and I can thank God that He has already rescued me from Hell, not that He is going to when I die, but He has now, and I now have everlasting life, I now am a child of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. I am already saved. But now dealing with me as a child, not as a lost sinner, but my sins now daily can come between me and God — not about damning my soul, that is not the issue — but causing me unhappiness, causing me to lose my influence. The scripture says Lot vexed his righteous soul day by day. If he had a righteous soul, he wasn't righteous outside. He sure was not. He lost his wife, and lost his daughters and his money. He ruined all his life. Poor, poor Lot! We see that Lot, even though he was a saved man and the Bible said he had a righteous soul, came to ruin outwardly in this world because of sin. A child of God needs daily to confess his sins. My sins are all forgiven as far as my soul's salvation is concerned. But as far as communion and happiness and influence is concerned, I need daily cleansing. Every day I ought to pray, as Jesus taught us to pray, "Lord, forgive my trespasses today, and I am going to forgive everybody else that has ever done anything against me." God says if I don't forgive others, in that sense my sins will stack up and pile up until after a while I can't get anything from God and God will seem a million miles away and I will have no happiness in my heart, no victory over sin, my power all gone, and my joy all gone, my influence gone because I didn't get cleaned up every day. Every Christian needs daily cleansing. That is what the Lord Jesus meant when He washed the disciples' feet. Peter said, "Lord, You will not wash my feet. No, sir!" Jesus said, "If I don't wash your feet, you have no part with me." Boy, that fixed it for Peter! He said, "Lord, not my feet only, but wash my hands and my head, too. Don't leave me out!" "That's all right," Jesus said, "all you need is to have your feet washed. You are already clean. You have already been washed, but your feet need washing every day." This is the way with a child of God. He is cleansed by the washing of water by the Word, but he has to walk in an awfully dirty world and he gets contaminated with the sin of this world, and every day he needs his feet washed. You need to come every day and get a new washing. "You don't need your soul saved, Peter. You don't need your hands and your head washed. You are already cleansed, except you live in a dirty world and every day you need your feet washed." And you can't have it unless you forgive everybody else whatever he has done.

You say, "But you don't know how mean she was to me and how mean she talked."

You don't know how mean and sorry you are, either, you poor, filthy-hearted sinner. You ought to have been in Hell. But God in His marvelous mercy forgave you and saved you, and you are holding grudges against somebody else. If I were the Lord, I would send you to the woodshed, and the Lord will do it, too, if you don't forgive others, for "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." I don't care what anybody has done to you in the world. Let me tell you, any Christian, if you have met the Lord Jesus and He has cleaned you all up today so that you can say in the words of the song:

"Nothing between my soul and the Saviour
So that His blessed face may be seen,
Nothing preventing the least of His pleasure,
Keep the way clear, let nothing between."

Now, brother, listen. I tell you I will forgive anything in the world you do to me if I can keep that, that light on my pathway, that joy in my heart, and keep the power when I preach so that old sinners will come weeping as they did this morning. I tell you right now, I will forgive anything you have ever done to me if God cleanses me up so I can have the way all clear and my heart full of joy and so I can have power with God and power with men. And I get that by daily forgiving everybody. When I

come to pray the Lord's prayer, I want to say, "Lord, I am forgiving everything anybody has ever done against me."

You know how we do. If I forgive today, I may have a grudge there again tomorrow. Dr. Walter Lewis Wilson tells this story. He said as a boy they had a cat, and the cat died. He always wanted to be a preacher, he said, so he preached the cat's funeral, and buried it in a shoe box for a coffin. By this time the cat was already stiff and they couldn't get the cat's tail in the box, so they cut a hole in the box and let the tail stick out. They buried the cat, but the next day he went back to see how it was doing and the cat's tail was sticking out, and he pulled it up by the tail. Every day he went by to see how it was getting along, and every day pulled it up by the tail. Every time he went back it smelled worse than ever. That is the way you do. You go and pull out that dirty, stinking carcass in the rotten cesspool of your heart. You say you have forgiven, but when someone comes along and does something that displeases you again, you pull up that old grudge. You low-down, dirty liar, you said you had forgiven that! You say, "I will forgive it, but I won't forget." You are whipping the devil around the stump. You haven't forgiven anybody at all, you are just lying! That is what is the matter with you. I tell you what you had better do. I would just say, "This is going to be from this day the rule of my life." I would say, "I will forgive everybody everything they have done against me." And tomorrow I would do it again. And if anything ever comes up, I would drag up all the cats you have thrown away and buried them forever and if necessary do it again tomorrow. I would say, "If the Lord is willing day by day to clean me up, I am willing to forgive everybody anything they do against me." If you don't God will not forgive you.

A friend of mine, Rev. Harlan J. Matthews, was pastor down in Elmmott community near Waco, Texas. He was pastor of a country Baptist church. They had a Saturday conference in that Baptist church, and began that Saturday morning the opening of their revival season. They were going to have revival services for ten days or so. In that church there were two deacons who lived on adjoining farms, and they had gotten out with each other over a line fence. One of them let the fence get down and the other man's cow got through into his cane or corn, and it caused a good deal of trouble.

"Why don't you keep your fence up?" one of them said.

"Why don't you keep your cow at home and look after your own cow?"

They fussed around about it and one of them said, "I won't look after your fence. I will build a fence of my own."

And he moved over just a foot and put down big posts and put up another fence.

And the other deacon said, "Well, you can't spite me. I will look after my own fence now," so he fixed up the fence, and they left a lane there just a foot wide, a devil's lane, and up and down, up and down he went raising the devil all the time. The boys of the two families fought on the way to school. And these men, everything that came up, they had a row over it.

Finally one of them said, "Don't you ever set your foot on my land again. If you do, I will shoot you! I will not have any more of you!"

One of them said — both were deacons in the Baptist church — "If that old hypocrite is going to church, I am not going. I will not get up and pass the collection pans and pass out the communion supper with that hypocrite."

The other said, "If that hypocrite is going to stay home, he can't bluff me out. I haven't done anything wrong."

And thus they went on, year after year. The two wives ate out their hearts in sorrow, but there was nothing they could do about it. This boy preacher preached that day on this passage, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

When he got through, the one deacon who was there came up to the front and said, "Did I under-

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HINDERED PRAYER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

stand you to say that if I didn't forgive anybody, no matter what they did to me, the Lord wouldn't forgive me?"

"It doesn't matter what you understood me to say, this is what Jesus Christ said. You can read it for yourself."

He put on his glasses and read that. He said, "Sure enough, that's there. I never knew that before."

He said to one of his sons, "Would you let me ride your pony home and you drive the mules and take the family?"

He jogged on down the lane, and the boys said, "I wonder where dad is going?"

When he got to the place to turn off he jogged on past and rode on toward his neighbor's house.

One boy said, "Dad is going down there to have this out. Dad has had this smouldering in his heart so long, he is going down there to have this out. There is going to be a killing down there. They have fought over this thing so long."

They hurried and tied up the mules and didn't take the wagon out, and one got a double-barrelled shot gun and the other got a pistol. He said, "If there is going to be a shooting, they are not going to kill my dad."

One went down through the horse pasture and the other down through the cane patch. They watched as their father jogged along on the pony. He didn't know what these boys were doing. He came to the gate and tied his horse and as he came in through the gate, the other farmer who was sitting on his front porch reading the Dallas Farm Weekly News, heard the front gate slam shut and looked up. He saw his neighbor coming up that he had sworn to kill, and there he was and didn't have any way to defend himself! He grabbed up his chair and raised it to strike.

"Never mind, neighbor, put down your chair. We have had enough of that foolishness. I didn't come down here for that, I came down here to talk to you."

Strangely the man put down his chair and put away his glasses, and his neighbor said, "I went this morning out to hear our preacher. He has started a revival. Did you know that you have grown children who are unsaved, and I have my two boys that are almost grown, and not one of our children are Christians in my family or yours? And here we have played the fool and gone on these ten years. And the preacher preached this morning and said if I didn't forgive anybody God wouldn't forgive me. I have got to get right so I can have my prayers answered and so I can have my boys saved and my girls saved."

"I wish you had said that ten years ago," his neighbor said.

And they put their arms around each other. The wife came out of the kitchen and dusted off her hands and cried and patted them on the back. And out yonder the boy in the cane patch took his shot gun and slunk off home and didn't say a word about what had happened. And the other one slunk home. When the father got home, they were all sitting around the table and they didn't say a word to the old man. He sat down and ate and didn't say a word about it. But Brother Matthews, my dear friend who was the young preacher, told me, "As God is my witness, some of those young people held their hands for prayer that night, and before the meeting was over, every child who had reached the age of accountability in both families had found the Lord!"

You are paying dear for any grudge you have. If you want God to hear you pray, you had better forgive today from the bottom of your heart everybody who has wronged you, and have nothing between you and God.

The Other Side of the Same Sin: Prayer Hindered By Lack of Reconciliation

Hindered prayer. And that isn't all. There is something besides the matter of forgiving your grudges. There is reconciliation. What I mean is this: I must fix it if I have something against somebody else, and then this other thing is, I must fix it if another fellow has something against me. We hear people say, "I will go half way." Not if you are a Christian brother,

you will go all the way! Yes, if you are a Christian, you will go two miles. Then somewhere between the two you should be able to get it fixed up. Yes, sir, if you have a grudge against somebody, forgive him. And if he has something against you, go run him down, and if he wants you to go a mile, go two. And if he hits you on one cheek, say, "I deserve it, go ahead and hit me on the other cheek." I mean just what God says. You had better get your friends right with you and be reconciled to your neighbor. I will read you from Matthew 5:23, 24:

"Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

"Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

All right, the Lord says, you have come to church. You think the Lord is surely glad you came to church and put a nickel in the offering today. God says, "Keep your stingy nickels, I don't want them." "What? Lord, You don't want my nickel? I always heard you were broke." But He says, "The cattle on a thousand hills are mine and the gold is mine." He is not broke and He says, "I don't want your tainted, dirty money — get away from My house." "What, Lord, don't You want me to come to church?" And when you come to pray, the Lord says, "Shut your trap! I won't listen. I will not hear you pray. I am not interested in your praying until you get right with your neighbor!" You come and sing in the choir and the Lord says, "Shut your loud mouth. Who told you to sing for Me?" You say, "I am singing for Your glory." And God says, "It isn't glorifying to me. Somebody has something against you and you haven't made it right. Don't come and bring me an offering. You go and get that fixed first."

A man says, "I will bring my fat lambs. I want the Lord to think I am the hot stuff. I will bring Him a tithe. This surely would make good lamb chops, but I will get enough bragging on and recognition at the temple to pay me back." But the Lord says, "Take it back home. I don't want it." "What? You don't want my gift?" "I don't want any gift as long as there is somebody else you have wronged or who thinks you have mistreated them. If you can't be reconciled to your brother, I don't want your prayers or your gifts." The Lord says you had just as well take out or get right. Some of you pass the offering pans or sing in the choir and pass for so much stuff, and everybody thinks you are so fine. God doesn't think you are so fine if you don't get right with your neighbor or your friend or relative who thinks you have wronged him. You say, "But I don't feel badly toward them." I know, but God wants you to fix it so they won't feel badly toward you. If he thinks you owe him your coat, give him your overcoat, too. If he thinks you owe it to him, stand still and let him get even with you. And if he hits you on one cheek, say, "Yes, hit me on the other side, too, if that makes you happy. I want to be friends and have peace with you." Then you can come and offer your lamb and bring your prayers and your talents and I will hear them, God says. But He says, "I want no service and no offerings and no prayers unless you are right with your neighbor." You say, "The Lord is hard to please, isn't He?" He surely is, on this. That's right.

This hypocrite thinks he is serving the Lord because he goes to church on Sunday and puts in a little money and the rest of the week he can live for the devil! The Lord said you must go and get reconciled with other folks. If there is living on the topside of this earth a single soul whose heart you have grieved, who feels you have wronged him, or you owe money or an apology or some way you have grieved him and you haven't made it right, if there are stripes and wounds you haven't bathed, go and fix that before you come hollering to God. He won't hear you, and He doesn't want your offering until you go and be reconciled to your brother. I know you don't like that way of doing.

If you would really listen to me, you would have a breaking out revival. I would be out and gone, but God wouldn't, and you would be out paying up bills and making up scores where you have hurt people, you would be apologizing for the criticism you have made, and you would get out and fix things. And then when you prayed, how all Heaven would delight to hear you! And God would take the money you have to offer Him, and even if you had nothing but the jawbone of an ass, God could use that to kill a thousand Philistines! Or if you only have five little barley loaves and two fishes, God can feed the five thousand with them. God can take anything you have if you really get right with your neighbor so He will hear you pray. Hindered prayer! Hindered prayer! HINDERED PRAYER! May God speak to hearts today. This is the Word of God.

God hasn't changed. His arm is not short and His ear isn't heavy that it cannot hear, but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.

Withholding Tithes and Offerings Hinders Prayer

Here is another, and this isn't going to be easy. You won't like this one, I am sure. Malachi, chapter three:

"Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?"

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation."

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

"And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts."

"And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:7-12).

All right, you are under a curse. What is the matter? You say, "Lord, Lord, give me something," and He says, "Nothing doing! Get away from my door! I don't like tramps. I don't want to listen to you!" You say, "But, Lord, listen. I need help." "You have a bad mark on you, and I don't want you around! You are a dirty thief! You are a robber!" You love God so much, you say, but you don't give Him a dime out of a dollar! You sing, "O How I Love Jesus," but when they pass the collection plate you stop your song. When the preacher begins to talk about tithing, you are just like a colored preacher on a big plantation in the South a good many years ago. There had been a good deal of chicken stealing going on, and finally the owner of the plantation said, "Listen, Sam. Aren't you the preacher and don't you have a big time down at the church house there?"

"Yes, suh, Boss! The Spirit sho is moving down there!"

"I tell you what I want you to do. There has been a good deal of chicken stealing going on around here, and I want you to crack down on 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

The colored preacher looked embarrassed and hummed and hawed a little bit, and said, "Well, no, suh. I hates to do that. That always seems to just kill the spirit of the meetin'."

I know, I know a lot of you sanctimonious hypocrites say you love God so much and that you give Him your whole heart. No, you don't! You don't give Him a stingy dime out of a dollar! I don't want your dirty money. I am not talking for money. I am talking for the Lord. And the Lord doesn't need your money, either. What He wants is your heart's love. He wants you to trust Him. And if you can't trust Him with a dime

out of a dollar, you can't trust Him about other things.

One of the best lessons I ever learned is that you can't get ahead of God. Back in 1926 I made a deal with God. Listen and see if I didn't put a fast one over on the Lord. I said, "I will give up this pastorate and go out in soul winning work, and I will trust You to take care of my business, and give my family food and clothes, and I will look after Your business." And in the poorest kind of a way I have done my part. I have just piddled around at His business, but He has looked after mine, and we have had food and clothes, and cars when we needed them, and a thousand dollars a month to pay a radio bill. And He has enabled me to print multiplied thousands of books — I gave away twenty-eight thousand last November, and the bill for that month alone was more than three hundred dollars. Didn't I make a real trade that time? I haven't attended to my part, but the Lord has attended to His.

Brother, you can't get ahead of God. I would say, "Lord, You can take care of it. Lord, You can take the whole dollar. Jesus died for me, and He won't let me go hungry." Try God out. You are stingy, you are a cheat, a thief, you are crooked! If you are bound to rob somebody, rob the grocerman, or beat your landlord out of the rent. If you are bound to steal, get a gun and put a handkerchief over your face and hold up somebody else. You low-down, dirty, sorry, crooked thief to rob the God who made you and gave you everything, and you won't trust Him enough to give Him a dime out of a dollar and free will offerings besides! God doesn't need your money, but He wants your heart's love. I have a good notion to get personal. How many of you people really give the Lord a tenth of your income and never less? (Many held hands). All right, now wait a minute. How many ever heard that is in the Bible? Some of you say, "Don't you think that is just for Jews?" Do you think a Jew in the Old Testament times ought to love God any better than you? Or you say, "That was just Moses' law." Stealing is just as crooked in the New Testament as in the Old Testament, did you know that? Stealing is crooked anywhere. And if you are robbing God, you are under a curse. That is what God said. The next time you get down to pray, say, "Lord, look at me. I am a dirty thief."

When you go to pray, the Lord will say, "Wait a minute. Gabriel, get me my black book. I want to see if this man is on the black list of the Heavenly Retail Credit Association here."

What do you think He would find out? When you get down to pray and say, "Oh, Lord, how I love You, I am trying to serve You," and you pour it on, and suppose the Lord just asks for the record on you and He says, "You are under a curse!"

Suppose I walked into a store down here and I say, "I would like to buy some household goods. I would like to do it on credit, and I will pay you next month." And they will say, "All right, Brother Rice," and they will keep me in conversation while they call up the Retail Credit Association and ask, "Does he pay his bills? Have you got anything against him?" They answer, "He bought something over here and took three months to pay a fifty cent bill." Then they will come back and say, "I am sorry, Mr. Rice, but we don't have your record. We would like to deal with you, and we will keep it for you until you can get the money."

So the next time you go to pray and it seems like you have a good deal of trouble getting anything from God, will you remember these words — "You are cursed with a curse for ye have robbed me"? Will you remember that? How many will say, the next time I have any trouble getting anything from God I will try to think of that verse?

All right—hindered prayer. That surely does kill the spirit of the meeting, doesn't it? We were getting along fine until I brought that up! You don't like that kind of preaching anyway. And "preachers are always preaching for money," you say. I've got your goat, and you know it! I have you where the wool is short and you don't love God enough to do what He said about that! I know I've got you where you need getting. And then you wonder why nobody

has any confidence in your brand of religion! You are a cheap-skate and covetous and you don't believe God! You are a stingy tight-wad and you love your dime better than to have your prayers answered! You can't risk God! I would rather have ninety cents and Jesus Christ, than to have a whole dollar and the devil. I surely would. Yes, sir. All right — hindered prayer.

Disobedience Hinders Prayer

There is another I want to call to your attention. I will turn back to First Samuel 15:22, 23. The Lord had said, "Saul, go and clean up these Amalekites. Spare not. Kill every man, woman and child and all the oxen and sheep and every head of cattle." And Saul went out to do it. Samuel went out to meet him as he was coming back, and said, "Did you do what God said?" "I sure did." "Well, what means this lowing of the oxen and the bleating of the sheep then?" And Saul said, "We saved some of the best ones, but we were really doing that for the Lord. They will be good for sacrifices. We didn't obey God, and the reason we didn't obey Him, we loved Him so well we decided to bring back some good ones. And this king, we didn't kill him — it would be much better to lead him behind our chariots, and we would get more glory out of that." And Samuel said:

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Now I wonder, is there any disobedience in your heart that has gone to the point of rebellion against God? If so, it will block your prayers and you can't get the things you need.

Read the rest of what Saul said. He said, "Let's go and pray, Samuel." And Samuel said, "I am not going with you. God will not hear you. God has put you out from being king, and there is no use asking Him. I tell you now, God is not going to hear you. He has already quit you, Saul, because you didn't do what you were told to do. You were disobedient and rebellious." And Samuel turned to go, and Saul grabbed his coat and held it and it tore, and Samuel said, "The Lord has rent the king-"

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A CORRECTION

With permission, we printed on April 19 a wonderful message by Dr. Addison C. Raws of Keswick, New Jersey. This message which was taken down by a stenographer, was printed in *The Sword of the Lord* before Dr. Raws had a chance to look it over. Now Mr. Raws tells us that instead of 4,000 men being cared for by the *Whosoever* Rescue Home there were 400,000, and we desire to make this correction for our readers. We praise God for this wonderful work at Keswick, New Jersey.

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Dr. K. B. Tracy, a Christian physician, has written some tracts and would like to have distributors who will receive the tracts free of charge and carefully distribute them to readers.

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HINDERED PRAYER

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

dom from you just like you tore this mantle."

How many are losing what God has for you because you won't obey Him! You say, "I tell you what I'll do. I'll be a Sunday School teacher." But you don't do the telling. You do the listening and let God do the telling. Or you say, "I will do so and so," or "I will do this and that." You had better hear me, God's way is the best. Why don't you say, "I will do what He wants me to do"? You say, "You know all the good service I have put in and all the money I have given. Don't you think, Brother Rice, that if I made a lot of money and gave it, that will do just as good?" Nothing in the world will do as well as strict obedience. About my children, I want them to love me, but the only kind of love that counts is obedient love. The only kind of love that will satisfy my heart is that surrendered love that God requires and that a husband wants. God doesn't want any kind of love but that says, "God's will is my will, and God's way shall be my way," and the love that will do what He says and let the will of the Lord be done.

Somebody lost a baby and went away with a bitter heart. You feel that out there in the city of the dead you left your heart's ambition and your heart is so sore and you wonder, Why, why did God do it? Or maybe it was a mother, and your heart rebels against God and there is bitterness against God. One of these days you will want something from God and you can't get it if your heart is in rebellion and there is bitterness against God. Rebellion blocks your prayers.

Loving Your Sins, Excusing and Holding Onto Them, Will Block Your Prayers

I will read another verse yet. In Psalm 66:18. If there is any coveted and unlamented sin, it will block your prayers. Listen to what the Lord says:

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

Now I want you to see a very beautiful distinction here. The Bible doesn't say if I do any iniquity the Lord will not hear me. If God had said that, "If you do any sin God will never hear you," we would never get any prayer answered in this life. We never would get a single prayer answered. Oh, how wicked our hearts are! Our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. The Bible says when we come to pray, every day we should say, "Lord, forgive us our sins." If I have got to come and say, "Forgive me," today, then I had some sin today. We would never get a prayer answered if God had put it on the basis if we ever sinned God would never hear our prayer. But that isn't what He said, thank God! He said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." The Lord does hear the prayer of a sinner if it is an humble, contrite confession of sin. Don't you know that when one comes and says, "Lord, I have sinned," the Lord will hear. David said it in the fifty-third Psalm. He said, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight. I am a sinner. In sin did my mother conceive me. The sacrifices of God are a broken heart, a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Give me back the joy," David said, "and sinners shall be converted unto thee." Don't you believe God heard that heartbroken prayer of David? I know He did.

You know First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If you are willing to confess your sin and repent of your sin, oh, how quick God is to forgive it! Do you remember that woman taken in adultery who came and stood with shame before Jesus in the eighth chapter of John. When all the accusers had gone, she stood shamefaced and tearful, but she didn't run away. Jesus said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" And she said, "No man, Lord." And she let the cat out of the bag when she called Him "Lord." I know what had happened in her heart. She said, "I

will call Him Lord, even if they did catch me in a wicked sin. I could run off, but I am not going to. I am going to stay right here and take Jesus as my Lord." She said, "They haven't condemned me." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

If your sin is as black as the pit of Hell, if your heart confesses it and if you come to Christ for mercy, you can have forgiveness and blessing!

You remember a woman came behind Jesus when He was at supper. Instead of sitting down, they lay on couches and leaned on this elbow and ate with their right hand. They took plenty of time to eat. This woman came behind Jesus, and she wept over His feet. The Pharisee that was sitting with Him said, "If He was really a prophet, He would know that this is a wicked woman. She is an awful sinner and everybody in town knows it." But as she knelt there and wept and the tears ran down onto Jesus' feet, she saw what she had done, and she took the hair of her head and wiped His feet with her hair, and kissed His feet. And Jesus said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." Simon said, "What is it, Jesus?" And the Lord said, "When I came into your house, you didn't anoint my head or wash my feet. But this woman washes my feet with tears." And He said, "Simon, she has sinned much and her sins which are many are forgiven her." And He said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." And she went home saved. And you are a poor old wicked sinner who ought to be in Hell!

But Jesus loves sinners, and He will forgive sinners, but He can't forgive sinners unless they confess and forsake their sin. With all your heart turn from your sin to Jesus.

Do you remember the publican in the temple that said, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? And do you know he went down to his house already forgiven before he got home when he said, "Lord, I am a poor sinner. Have mercy on me." If you are a sinner, and if in your heart you confess your sin and forsake your sin, God won't hold it against you.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

I don't know who is here today, but if your sin is of the blackest type, He will cleanse you and make you clean. Thank God, the sinner is just the very thing that Jesus died for! He came to save sinners. And if you are a sinner, He wants to save you. But if you regard iniquity in your heart the Lord will not hear you. But your sin, if you shut it out and say, "This is a dirty, wicked sin, I am against it, I hate it," the Lord will forgive it. He will forgive it and take it out if you hate sin and confess it and uncover it. God will bless you and forgive you and cleanse you. But if you hug the thing to your heart and say, "This is a dirty, wicked sin, I am against it, I hate it," the Lord will forgive it. He will forgive it and take it out if you hate sin and confess it and uncover it. God will bless you and forgive you and cleanse you. But if you hug the thing to your heart and say, "There is not very much harm in it" — just last night a certain man said about the cigarette habit, "I don't think there is any harm in that." But today in the service, he burst into tears, and the first thing I knew, he put his head down in his hands and cried, and then he came up to make a new start. And as I started to go away, he held on to me, and reached into his pocket and got a package of Camel cigarettes and said, "Take these, I don't want them." I put them up on the pulpit and left them there. He will cleanse your heart if you confess your sin and turn your heart away from sin. God will forgive it the moment you do. He loves sinners and the only reason any sinner in the world isn't saved is that he hugs sin to his heart and won't let God cleanse it away. You can't have peace while you are loving sin and holding on to sin.

I wonder who is here — some of you are lost — but Jesus died for lost sinners. He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." If you are

A SAVIOUR FOR LOST SHEEP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

saying we have all gone astray like sheep, we have all gone our own way, I would not have been the least surprised to read after that, dear friends, "And the Lord witnessed against us and consigned us to the lowest Hell." I would not have been surprised if God had said, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have rebelled against Him, therefore He determined against us nothing but perdition for eternity," and not a soul would have had a word to say against it. That is our deserts. And, friends, we are going to get red hot for God and love souls more when we realize the awful fate from which the blood of Christ saves us. Do you think that God gave His beloved Son up to the cross and for scourging just to save us from some temporary fate? I don't believe it for a moment. I believe with all my heart and soul that the Lord Jesus Christ died to save us from a fate far worse than words could ever tell. He knew what it was like beyond for an unforgiven soul, and so made Himself responsible, and instead of a word of condemnation we hear His gracious word. Who shall begin to speak adequately of this — "And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." On him — who is "him"? He is the sinless, stainless Son of God.

"The wages of sin is death." He never sinned, and yet He died. Oh, listen, friend, if sin is man's fatal act, the cross is God's vital act. In that sentence is wrapped all the promise, all power, all potency — the cross is God's vital act for sinful man. Ours is all the guilt and shame, and His is all the grace and glory.

So this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is a marvelous setting forth of God's beloved Son, making a way for us back home that He might seek and save that which was lost. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

There are people who say, "How

lost, then you are in a good shape to get saved. Jesus died for you. If you are lost, God wants you saved. But until you confess you are a lost sinner, He wants you to uncover your wickedness — if you say, "I am already as good as the church members. I am a member of a lodge, and I think that is just as good," or "I am doing the best I know," or maybe you say, "I was confirmed or baptized." I don't care whether you were baptized or sprinkled or confirmed or vaccinated, you are going to Hell just the same if you don't have a change of heart! Listen to me, Do you have a new heart? If you are not saved, it is because of sin and rebellion against Christ, you won't love Him, you won't trust Him, you won't give Him your heart. You are going to Hell, and God won't hear you pray until you are willing to turn loose that thing that is back in your tent and take it out of your heart and out of your arms. I would confess it and forsake it. You may say, "I can't take it out." You can't, but you can confess it and God will do the rest. Won't you let Him do it today?

(Several held hands for prayer and three adults came forward openly to claim Christ. One a man who had never made a profession and two women.)

If you, dear reader, are unsaved, nothing but sin keeps you from Christ. Will you forsake your sins in your heart, trust Christ for forgiveness and be saved today? If you will, please sign the decision slip below, having a definite transaction with God and depending on Him alone to save, and let us hear from you.

Evangelist John R. Rice
512 West Franklin Street
Wheaton, Illinois
Dear Brother Rice:

I know nothing but sin has kept me away from the Saviour. After reading your sermon on *Hindered Prayer*, I do today earnestly repent of my sins. I confess to Christ I am a sinner, and I trust Him today for forgiveness and salvation. God helping me, I will claim Him openly and will live for Him beginning today.

Signed _____

Address _____

can the death of one man suffice for all? How can the fact that Jesus Christ died on the cross be the atonement for the sins of the whole world?" They say guilt is a personal thing and cannot be transferred from one to the other. They say all sorts of things. And it is quite true that no mere man could bear the sins of the world. No mere man could pay the penalty for your sins and mine. No, mere man could not even for himself cleave a way through the debris of sin and shame that shuts us out from God. But Jesus is no mere man. This isn't speaking of mere man. Whatever man may be unable to do, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. This is the strong Son of God who came to take our place and bear our penalty. Yes, the Father hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

You know, dear friends, we don't often hear sermons on the sufferings of the Father. We don't often hear a preacher make reference to what it cost God to give His beloved Son, but it must have cost Him something tremendous. Do you think the Father's heart was unmoved when He saw His beloved Son, at His own behest, taking that place of desertion and dereliction? There are depths in Calvary that none but the Father can understand. I am glad that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Oh, yes, Christ is more than mere man!

At the heart of this rugged cross is the eternal God, and it was through the eternal Spirit that the Lord Jesus Christ offered Himself to God. No wonder the apostle Paul, the man conversant with Greek philosophy, cultured in all the learning of his schools, turned his back on these things and said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." There is no hope for any heart of man until the eye beholds the Son of God on yonder rugged cross.

"All my iniquities on Him were laid,
All my indebtedness by Him was paid.
All who believe on Him the Lord hath said,
Hath everlasting life."

There was a great preacher and a great writer and a great friend of D. L. Moody in Scotland, Henry Drummond, and poor Henry Drummond wandered far away in doubtful things for quite a long time in his life, and there were some books later on he was sorry he had written. But he lay near the end of his life and some friends were gathered around, and as they sat there, he said, "Sing."

"What shall we sing?"
"Oh," he said, "when we come to an hour like this and everything of earth is failing, there is only one thing that gives the soul comfort and peace. Sing that hymn, 'There Is A Fountain Filled.'"

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains."

Unsaved one today listening in and sitting in here in this Opera House, there is only One who can save you and give you a standing place before God and put a new song in your mouth, even praise unto your Redeemer, and that One is the Lord Jesus Christ. He bore it all.

"Oh, Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head,
Our load was laid on Thee.
Thou stoodest in the sinner's stead
And bare all ill for me.
A victim led, Thy blood was shed,

Now there's no load for me."
I tell you, when you come to the end of all these fanciful and fictitious things that so many seem to be falling in love with today, you will feel absolutely helpless. Yes, and even day by day for the comfort of life on the trials and troubles, there is nothing but Christ who can satisfy, and none is able to keep the poor heart of man.

We heard of a great preacher in England some years ago, Dr. Berry by name. He was a wonderful orator, but he did not preach salvation through the blood of Christ. On one occasion he sat in his study

late at night, and he was about to light up his pipe, of which he was very fond, and the bell rang. The maid went to the door, and after a while she came back and said, "There is a poor creature at the door, a poor woman. She wants you to come. Her mother is dying and sent for you."

"Tell her I can't come. I have had a hard day."

"But she persists and will not go away. I have tried to get rid of her. She said her mother is dying and you must come."

Very reluctantly he put on his overcoat and went with this poor young woman. He thought, "Now, what would some of my congregation think of me if they should see me in the company of a woman like this?" So they took the roads that wouldn't bring them in touch with the crowd, he skipped the busy streets, and finally this girl led him up a rickety stairway.

When the dying woman saw the preacher, she said, "Oh, I am dying, and I have had such a life of sin — I am such a sinner — tell me something that will give me peace as I pass out of this world. How will I get right with God? How can I be sure it is all right for the other world?"

So this great preacher of modern ethics stooped down and began with the scripture about the Lord Jesus — not about His blood or His cross — and said, "God is merciful, and the Lord Jesus says if you do this thing and that —"

"Oh," she said, "there is nothing in that for me! I want to know how can I get rid of this burden. I have tried one thing and tried another."

Then he came back to his old mother's theology and started to quote, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

"Oh, that's it! That's it! I can die on that!"

And the old preacher said, "I got her in that night, and I got in myself at the same time."

Friend, there is only one way you can get in, and that is through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you in today? Can you make it yours? Can you say, "All my iniquity was laid on Him, and I am trusting Him as mine. I know He is mine, this Friend so dear."

"Ten thousand charms around Him shine,
And best of all, I know He's mine."

While all that is true and everything that needs to be done has been done, yours is the responsibility, unsaved one, today. You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. The proverb is made for you. All that needs to be done has been done, and the Father is satisfied with the death of His Son. "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was laid upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." He was delivered for our offences, and He was raised for our justification. Everything has been done that needs to be done, but yours is the solemn and singular responsibility. You can take, or you can refuse to take. What is going to be your verdict today? Are you going to say "Yes" to the Saviour, "Thou hast died for sinners, and therefore, Lord, for me. I can hold out no longer." Will you do it? Do it now, will you?

Let us bow our heads in prayer. Now while our heads are bowed in prayer, the Lord is looking on, and He knows your heart, and He only knows it. Maybe your past has been dark and black, and your sins are still unforgiven and if God were to call you into eternity, you know you would be lost forever. Will you say, "Yes, I will take Christ as my Saviour. I want to be sure on this question, it is too important a matter to trifle with. Pray for me that I may know Christ as my Saviour."

God requires of us that we make the way plain, but yours is the solemn responsibility. What then will you do with Jesus, in the light of the cross and all He has done for you, all He has endured for you? Will you still say No?

Father, we thank Thee that Thou art able to save and we praise Thee that Thou art willing to save. We marvel that Thou dost love us and gave Thy Son to die for us. But we praise Thee that it is true. We know it is true. It is real. So we ask that even here and now some who are still unsaved, may they hear the voice of the Son of God and hearing, live. May they know Christ as their Saviour. Amen.